United Nations

Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz tells correspondents that his delegation's visit to New York is "a goodwill mission".

+ Force Commander of United Nations Protection Force in Yugoslavia to begin consultations with Croatian authorities tomorrow.

+ Human Rights Commission concludes forty-eighth session in Geneva.

+ Commission on Status of Women opens thirty-sixth session in Vienna tomorrow; will focus on 1995 World Conference on Women, among other things.

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Security Council President Diego Arria (Venezuela) met today with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz and other Government officials for talks on Iraq's position on Council demands that that country provide full disclosure of its weapons programmes.

Following the meeting, Tariq Aziz told correspondents that he had conveyed to the Council President that the visit of the Iraqi delegation was "a goodwill mission" aimed at explaining to the Council which of its obligations contained in the Council's resolutions Iraq had already implemented. The purpose of the meeting was also to reach a "reasonable understanding with the Council on the further process". Iraq wanted a "professional implementation" of the resolutions -- not one driven by "biased political motives", the Iraqi Minister explained.

Following consultations this afternoon, the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the United Nations, Sir David Hannay, told the press that the Secretary-General's latest report on Iraqi compliance with resolution 687 (1991) had concluded that Iraq "was not in compliance" with that document. He further said that the opening statement by the Council President tomorrow at the formal meeting would be "extremely firm" and would convey an "important message" to Iraq.

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Last night, following consultations by the Council on the matter, the Council President said the objectives of the meetings with the Iraqi delegation was to "normalize relations with a member country" of the United Nations. He asserted that Iraq would be given ample time to present its case and said that Council members would convene in a formal meeting tomorrow, Wednesday 11 March, and would continue the meeting on Thursday, "if circumstances so required".

The Council condemned on 28 February, in a Presidential statement, the failure of Iraq to provide the special mission sent to Iraq a week earlier with an "unconditional agreement" to implement all the Council's resolutions and warned Iraq of "serious consequences" of continued breaches of its resolutions.

The Council President was also scheduled to meet today with the Executive Chairman of the Special Commission on Iraqi Disarmament, Rolf Ekeus, and with Hans Blix, Director of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

At a press conference at noon before his meeting with the Council President, Mr. Ekeus told correspondents that it was his understanding that Iraq would get "a clear message" from the Council saying that all its weapons must be disclosed. He noted that compliance by Iraq would be a "very strong incentive for sanctions against Iraq to be eased".

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The 34-member advance party that arrived in Belgrade yesterday, led by the Force Commander of United Nations Protection Force in Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR), Lieutenant-General Satish Nambiar, has begun its reconnaissance missions in the United Nations Protected Areas (UNPA).

The mixed military, police, and civilian reconnaissance teams left Belgrade this morning for the UNPA of Eastern Slavonia and Krajina. A similar mission will depart from Zagreb for Western Slavonia tomorrow.

Today, while the advance party was on reconnaissance mission, Force Commander Nambiar travelled from Belgrade to Zagreb where he was briefed by the United Nations Military Liaison Office. Tomorrow, he will begin a series of consultations with Croatian authorities, and on Friday in Sarajevo, he will inspect possible sites for the UNPROFOR headquarters.

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The Commission on Human Rights has ended its six-week session in Geneva, again devoting the greater part of it to examining the question of human rights violations as they occur anywhere in the world. The forty-eighth session also witnessed the admission to the main United Nations human rights body of 10 additional members.

In his closing remarks, Jan Martenson, outgoing Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights, suggested that the United Nations adopt efforts to

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strengthen and protect democratic institutions everywhere in the world. In those cases where the Organization had been instrumental in the establishment of democracy, it could not morally stand by and abandon a people to be robbed of its birthright by force of arms, he said.

During the session, deposed Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide had urged the Commission to take a stronger stand against Governments that come to power by force of arms. Among its decisions, the Commission strongly condemned the overthrow of the Haitian leader and requested that a special rapporteur be appointed to prepare a report on human rights in that country.

In other action, the Commission also deeply deplored the deterioration the situation in Equatorial Guinea and recommended the appointment of an expert for the human rights situation there. Concerning Guatemala, the Commission recognized the clear commitment of the Government to guarantee the full enjoyment of human rights, but expressed profound concern at the persistence of serious violations. Action was also taken regarding Albania, Afghanistan, Western Sahara, Cambodia and Sri Lanka.

The Commission has also taken action relating to the human rights situation in Myanmar, Iraq, Cuba, Iran, Israeli-occupied territories, East Timor and South Africa, Albania, Afghanistan, Western Sahara, Cambodia, Sri Lanka and Romania.

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Preparations for the 1995 World Conference on Women, communications concerning the status of women, and violence against women, among other things, will be the focus of attention of the Commission on the Status of Women, scheduled to hold its thirty-sixth session in Vienna from 11 to 20 March.

The session will also examine improvement of the status of women in the United Nations Secretariat and the priority themes of equality, development and peace. Priority will also be accorded to positive action that can be taken to achieve equality for women and reduce the gap between discrimination in law and in practice. A report of the Secretary-General, to be reviewed by the Commission, asserts that despite considerable progress in eliminating legal discrimination, it still existed in practice, as shown by statistics on the ratio of women to men in education, the labour force and decision-making positions.

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